

TWELVE STEPS

HOW IT WORKS

If you want what we have to offer, and are willing to make the effort to get it, then you are ready to take certain steps. These are suggested only, but they are the principles that made our recovery possible.

1. We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. We continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us, and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of those steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

This sounds like a big order, and we can't do it all at once, we didn't become addicted in one day, so remember — EASY DOES IT.

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF N.A.

We keep what we have only with vigilance and just as freedom for the individual comes from the Twelve Steps so freedom for the groups springs from our traditions.

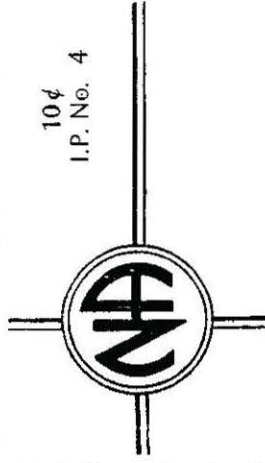
As long as the ties that bind us together are stronger than those that would tear us apart, all will be well.

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.
2. For our Group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our Group conscience, our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.
4. Each Group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other Groups, or N.A., as a whole.
5. Each Group has but one primary purpose — to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
6. An N.A. Group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the N.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every N.A. Group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our Service Centers may employ special workers.
9. N.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. N.A. has no opinion on outside issues; hence the N.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Literature can be ordered from:

Narcotics Anonymous, World Service Office, Inc.
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NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

WE MADE A DECISION

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WE MADE A DECISION

All of us now in N.A. had to make one crucial decision before we felt secure in the new program of life without drugs. We had to face the facts about ourselves and our drug using realistically and honestly. We had to admit that we were powerless over drugs. For some of us, this was the toughest proposition we had ever faced. We did not know too much about drug addiction. We had preconceived impressions about the term "addict." We associated it chiefly with down-and-out derelicts. Or we thought it implied degradation in some other form. Some of us resisted making the admission that we were addicts. Others clung to mental reservations.

Most of us, however, were relieved when it was explained to us that drug addiction was an illness. We saw the common sense of doing something about an illness that threatened to destroy us. We quit trying to deceive others — and ourselves — into thinking that we could handle drugs when all the evidence pointed to the contrary.

It was emphasized to us from the beginning that no one but we, ourselves, could determine whether or not we were addicts. The admission had to be sincere and based on our own judgment — not that of a doctor, husband, wife, or spiritual adviser. Our friends might be able to help us understand the nature of our problem but we were the only ones who could determine whether drugs had become an uncontrollable problem for us. Frequently we asked: "How can I tell if I am really an addict?" We were told that there were no hard and fast rules for determining drug addiction. We learned that there were, however, certain tell-tale symptoms. If we got "loaded" when we had every reason to stay clean, if our drug using had become progressively worse, if we no longer got as much fun from using as we once had — these, we learned, were apt to be symptoms of the illness we call drug addiction. Reviewing our using experiences and their consequences, most of us were able to discover additional corroborating evidence.

Quite naturally, the prospect of a life without drugs seemed distasteful and dull. We feared that our new friends in N.A. would either be square or, worse yet, be fanatics. We discovered that they were, instead, human beings like ourselves with the special virtue of understanding our problem instead of merely condemning us for it, as so many non-addicts had done in the past.

We began to wonder what we had to do to stay clean, what membership in N.A. would cost, and who "ran" the Society locally and worldwide. We soon discovered that there are no "musts" in N.A., that no one is required to follow any formal ritual or pattern of living. We also learned that N.A. has no dues or fees of any kind; expenses incurred for meeting rooms, refreshments, and other incidentals are defrayed by passing the hat, but even contributions of this kind are not a requirement of membership.

It soon became apparent to us that N.A. has no formal organization and that it has no governing officers. The arrangement of meetings and the other jobs that are essential in keeping the Fellowship together are handled by informal committees whose membership is rotated periodically. These committees act as servants of the group for limited periods, not as officers.

How, then, do we manage to stay clean in such an informal, loosely-knit fellowship?

The answer is that, once having achieved it, we try to preserve it by observing and following the successful experience of those who have preceded us in N.A.

Their experience provides certain "tools" and guides which we are free to accept or reject, as we may choose. Because our being clean is the most important thing in our lives today, we think it the best part of wisdom to follow the patterns suggested by those who have already demonstrated that the N.A. recovery program really works.

For example, we take no pledges; we don't say that we will abstain from drugs "forever." Instead we try to follow what we call the "Twenty-Four Hour Plan." We concentrate on keeping clean for just the current 24 hours. We simply try to get through one day at a time without drugs. If we feel the urge to use, we neither yield nor resist. We merely defer taking that particular drug until to-morrow.

We try to keep our thinking honest and realistic where drugs are concerned. If we are tempted to use — and the temptation usually fades after the first period of transition into N.A. — we ask ourselves whether the particular drug we have in mind would be worth all the consequences we have experienced from using in the past. We bear in mind that we are perfectly free to get loaded, if we want to, that the choice between using and non-using is entirely up to us. Most important of all, we try to face up to the fact that no matter how long we may have been clean, we will always be addicts — and addicts, as far as we know, cannot use drugs normally.

We follow the experience of the successful "old-timers" in another respect. We usually keep coming regularly to meetings of the local N.A. group with which we have become affiliated.

There is no rule which makes such attendance compulsory. Nor can we always explain why we seem to get a lift out of hearing the personal stories and interpretations of other members. Most of us, however, feel that attendance at meetings and other informal contacts with fellow N.A. members are important factors in maintaining our objective to stay clean.